

the F-101 DFE is relatively heavier than current fighter engines, but higher thrust-to-weight ratios have been traded off for better engine durability and reliability.

Current limited development and flight test demonstrations are underway due to a \$79.3-million 30-month contract the Air Force awarded to General Electric in March 1979. ■☆☆

New Stealth Investigation; Justice Mum on Old One

by W. Eric Casey

THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT is keeping a tight lid on its investigation of press leaks involving the highly sensitive Stealth aircraft program (Sept. 1980, *AFJ*). Since the Carter Administration requested this investigation in September 1980, *AFJ* has periodically checked with Justice to determine the status of its investigation (Jan., Mar. *AFJ*). In the past, Justice has responded that the investigation is "still in the preliminary stages." Now, they refuse to discuss any aspect of it. All recent *AFJ* queries concerning the investigation received the same reply: "No comment." Justice officials would not even acknowledge whether the investigation was still underway.

Last September, the House Armed Services Subcommittee, chaired by Rep. Samuel S. Stratton (D-NY), conducted hearings on national security leaks, specifically those involving Stealth technology (Oct. 1980 *AFJ*). DoD undertook its own investigation of the leaks and later requested that Justice initiate its own investigation in response to the Hill concern. As *AFJ* went to press, the Investigations Subcommittee had heard nothing on the progress—or lack of it—of Justice's investigation. Surprised by Justice's "no comment" to *AFJ* queries, Subcommittee Counsel John Lally told the *Journal* that Justice had made no commitment to report their findings to Congress. But the issue is far from closed.

In the Senate, Minority Leader Robert C. Byrd (D-WV) sent a letter to President Reagan on June 9th, requesting that Reagan order "an immediate investigation" into the problem of "leaks" of sensitive national security information. Although the letter was not made available to the public, Byrd's press spokesperson told *AFJ* the Senator was prompted by reports published by *Aviation Week* in early June which contained classified information about the Stealth "bomber" program. On June 30th, Reagan responded in writing, saying, "The Administration will act decisively in accordance with the law in seeking to bring an end to these actions." ■☆☆

Navy Salutes 2,000th SSBN Patrol

by Judy Jaicks

On June 27th, the USS *James K. Polk* returned to Charleston, S.C., completing its 2,000th deterrent patrol of a fleet ballistic missile submarine (SSBN). In patrol 21 years ago, the nation's 41 SSBNs have spent over 100,000 days at sea, more than 275 years. The longest single patrol was by the USS *Triton*, which was on consecutive days submerged.

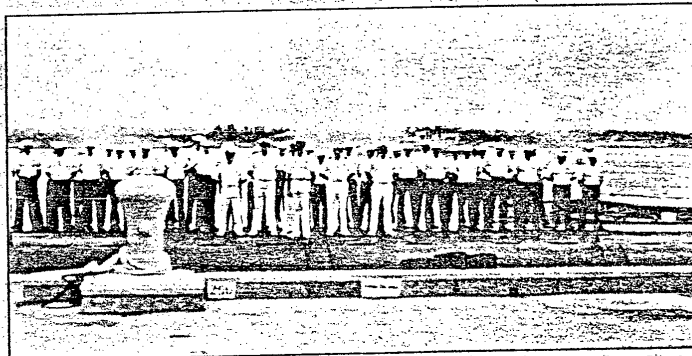
SSBNs are considered the strongest leg of the strategic Triad because of their endurance and undetectability. Their arrivals are rarely marked by public ceremony. The announcement of the *Polk's* arrival was an unusual gesture, promoting the Navy's desire to attract, recruit, and retain capable sailors.

Recently promoted Admiral John G. Williams, Jr., the new Chief of Naval Materiel Command and the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Submarine Warfare, stressed in a speech when the *Polk* came home, that the Navy needs 30-40% more submarine officers to create a better balance between time spent at sea and ashore. This feeling was reemphasized by Lt. Cdr. William Castle, executive officer of the SSBN USS *Simon Bolivar*, which was in dock at Charleston and open for press-viewing prior to the *Polk's* arrival. Castle told *AFJ* that the retention rate among NCOs was about "40-50%."

The 425-foot long *Polk*, commissioned in 1966, displaces 8,250 tons submerged and carries 16 missiles. Since its first patrol, its missiles were converted from Polaris to Poseidon and now the new 3,500nm range Trident C-4. The new 560-foot long Trident (Ohio-class) submarines are scheduled to replace the older SSBNs commissioned between 1959 and 1967 as they reach the end of their operational lives in the 1990s; displacing 18,700 tons, they carry 24 Trident C-4 missiles and can accommodate almost 40 more crewmembers. The *Ohio* successfully completed its first sea trials just prior to the *Polk's* return. Like the *Polk*, *Ohio* was built by the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics.



Lt. Cdr. William Castle guides *AFJ's* Jaicks through the USS *Simon Bolivar's* missile compartment.



Officers and members of USS *Polk* as they arrived in Charleston after completing the 2,000th FBM deterrent patrol. *Polk's* Gold crew is commanded by Capt. Richard N. Johannes.

How does US submarine technology compare to the Soviet's? Cdr. Leon F. King, skipper of the *Simon Bolivar's* Blue crew, has spent a total of about seven years submerged. He told *AFJ* there is "no comparison" between US and Soviet technology. His submarines have "never" been detected by Soviet submarines, surface ships, or aircraft, he said. King said he had "no desire" to command a Soviet SSBN: "Intellectually, yes," he added, "but as a warrior, no."

Asked what challenges a nuclear submarine skipper most, King said it is training. US crewmembers are in a constant state of training so that their responses under stress become instant, automatic, and predictable. "Machinery is easy to predict," he said, "it is the people who are the challenge." ■☆☆